

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A method of predicting whether a human patient is susceptible to cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or both, resulting from an infection, the method comprising: obtaining a sample of a body fluid from the patient, determining a level of a brain natriuretic peptide (BNP), or both BNP and atrial natriuretic peptide (ANF), within the sample of body fluid and comparing the level of BNP, or both BNP and ANF to the level of BNP, or both BNP and ANF from a control group, wherein an increase in the level of BNP, or both BNP and ANF in the sample, compared to the level of BNP, or both BNP and ANF in the control group, indicates that cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or both cardiomyopathy and myocarditis will arise as a result of an infection in the patient, and predicting the patient is susceptible to cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or both, as a result of the infection where the level of BNP, or both BNP and ANF in the sample is increased.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining the level of BNP, or both BNP and ANF comprises performing an assay comprising at least one antibody exhibiting affinity for the BNP, ANF, or both.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the body fluid comprises plasma.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the body fluid comprises urine.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the body fluid comprises cerebrospinal fluid.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the infection comprises a viral infection, a rickettsial infection, a bacterial infection, a mycobacterial infection, a spirochetal infection, a fungal infection, or a parasitic infection.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the parasitic infection comprises *Trypanosoma cruzi*.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the at least one antibody comprises a polyclonal antibody, a monoclonal antibody, or a combination thereof.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one antibody comprises a polyclonal antibody.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one antibody comprises a monoclonal antibody.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of obtaining a sample of a body fluid from the patient comprises obtaining two or more samples of body fluid from the patient at different points in time.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein, in the step of determining the level of BNP or the level of BNP and ANF, the level of BNP or the level of BNP and ANF is determined within each of the two or more samples of body fluid, and the level of BNP or both BNP and ANF compared to determine a change in the BNP, or both BNP and ANF levels within the body fluid over time.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein a significant increase in the level of BNP, or both BNP and ANF is a predictor of cardiomyopathy or myocarditis.

14 – 19. (Canceled)

20. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the assay is selected from the group consisting of RIA, ELISA, fluoroimmunoassay, immunofluorometric assay, and immunoradiometric assay.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Withdrawn – Previously Presented) A method of monitoring the effectiveness of a therapy for treating cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or an infection capable of causing cardiomyopathy or myocarditis in a patient, the method comprising;

- i) obtaining two or more samples of a body fluid from the patient at different points in time;
- ii) determining the level of a brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) or both BNP and ANF, within the two or more samples of body fluid;

wherein, a decrease in BNP, or both BNP and ANF level in a sample taken at a later time point as compared to the BNP or both BNP and ANF level in a sample taken at an earlier time point indicates success of the treatment.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises treating the patient to treat cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or both, if the patient is predicted to be susceptible to cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, or both, as a result of the infection.

25. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the method predicts whether a human patient is susceptible to myocarditis resulting from an infection.

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26. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the method predicts whether a human patient is susceptible to cardiomyopathy and myocarditis resulting from an infection.

27. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the human patient does not show signs of heart disease or dysfunction.